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New York

President:	Mr. Gaspar Martins	(Angola)
Members:	Bulgaria	Mr. Raytchev
	Cameroon	Mr. Belinga-Eboutou
	Chile	Mr. Muñoz
	China	Mr. Zhang Yishan
	France	Mr. Duclos
	Germany	Mr. Pleuger
	Guinea	Mr. Sow
	Mexico	Mr. Aguilar Zinser
	Pakistan	Mr. Akram
	Russian Federation	Mr. Konuzin
	Spain	Mr. Arias
	Syrian Arab Republic	Mr. Mekdad
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Emyr Jones Parry
	United States of America	Mr. Cunningham

Agenda

The importance of mine action for peacekeeping operations

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03-61105 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The importance of mine action for peacekeeping operations

The President: In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, and in the absence of objection, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I invite Mr. Guéhenno to take a seat at the Council table.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, and in the absence of objection, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Martin Dahinden, Director of the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I invite Mr. Dahinden to take a seat at the Council table.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

At this meeting the Security Council will hear briefings by Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, and by Mr. Martin Dahinden, Director of the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining.

I call first on Mr. Guéhenno.

Mr. Guéhenno (*spoke in French*): Today's debate on mine action comes at a timely moment: as you, Sir, preside over the work of the Security Council. Your country, Angola, has been among the countries most affected by mines; unfortunately, the presence of mines, resulting from war, continues today to claim victims and to hamper economic recovery, the distribution of humanitarian assistance and development efforts in a number of provinces.

We think with sympathy of all of your compatriots who paid a heavy price because of the scourge posed by mines. Today's debate is particularly appropriate since a Security Council mission has just returned from Afghanistan where the United Nations Mine Action Service — an integral part of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations — manages the largest mine action programme in the world. The mission was briefed at the Mine Dog Centre training facility in Kabul, and learned that in Afghanistan, 7,600 Afghans, 20 international staff and 200 dogs conduct mine action. It also learned that mine action is both an immediate humanitarian imperative and a precondition to reconstruction and development.

Although Afghanistan is one of the most severely mine-affected countries in the world, the mission learned that with current levels of funding, all high-impacted areas can only be cleared by 2007. A number of former combatants in Afghanistan participating in the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration process, led by the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, will benefit from mine clearance training that should enable them to help their countries and be economically self-sufficient.

In Afghanistan and in Angola, you can see the full range of mine action activities in progress: mine-risk education to the populations of affected areas, assistance to the victims of landmine explosions, surveying and clearance of mined areas, destruction of stockpiles, and advocacy efforts with military leaders to persuade them to abandon the use of mines, in compliance with the commitments undertaken under the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Treaty.

This is not the first time that the Security Council has acknowledged the contribution of mine action to international efforts to maintain peace and security. In August 1996, the Council discussed demining in the context of peacekeeping operations and focused on the need for internal coordination within the United Nations system, as well as the need to integrate mine action components into peacekeeping missions, when relevant.

Since the 1996 discussion, United Nations mine action has made remarkable progress. The United Nations Mine Action Service within the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), the United Nations

Development Programme (UNDP) and the Children's Fund (UNICEF) are the lead United Nations actors undertaking and coordinating mine action initiatives. UNDP supports national mine-action authorities in over 20 countries. UNICEF has responsibility for mine-risk education in 28 countries. And the United Nations Mine Action Service has overall responsibility for the coordination of United Nations mine action and the management of mine-action programmes in seven peacekeeping or humanitarian emergency contexts. The United Nations Mine Action Service supports initiatives in Cyprus through the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP), the Democratic Republic of the Congo through the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC), Eritrea through the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE), and south Lebanon through the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), as well as in Afghanistan, Iraq and Sudan.

Today the Security Council is going one step further by acknowledging the contribution of mine action to peacekeeping operations and to efforts to maintain international peace and security.

(*spoke in English*)

I would like to offer a few illustrations of how this is being done in practice.

In the Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea and south Lebanon, mine survey and clearance operations are essential for the safe deployment of the peacekeeping mission, and enable the mandate to be carried out.

Mine action can help to build confidence during peace processes. In Cyprus, preparations have started, with strong support from UNFICYP, with cooperation from UNDP, to clear minefields from the buffer zone that divide the island. While the land has potential productive uses, the clearance programme is largely appreciated for its political value in helping to remove a symbol of division. In Sudan, mine action has brought together the Government and the Sudanese People's Liberation Movement in a unique cooperation to clear mines in the Nuba Mountains.

Mine action engages the parties to a conflict in humanitarian initiatives. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Mine Action Coordination Centre works closely with peacekeepers to obtain commitments from the parties to the conflict to refrain from the use of mines, to destroy stockpiles and to provide information on minefields.

United Nations mine action helps build peace and security in more than a dozen other countries or regions of concern to the Security Council. The United Nations is supporting mine action in Afghanistan, Albania, Angola, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burundi, Cambodia, Croatia, Georgia, Guinea-Bissau, Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Sudan, and Tajikistan.

Mine action is a dynamic component of peacekeeping operations and contributes to the way we plan operations and conduct our work.

The efficient execution of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations' emergency operations requires early planning involving mine action specialists. Staff of the United Nations Mine Action Service recently participated in an early assessment mission to Liberia in advance of deployment of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL).

The Mine Action Service also provides information on the scope and humanitarian impact of the problems of landmines, unexploded ordnance and explosive remnants of war, which is included in all reports of the Secretary-General on peacekeeping operations to the Security Council.

Multidimensional peacekeeping operations now include child protection advisers, gender focal points and often, mine action coordination centres. Within DPKO, and in collaboration with other United Nations partners, we are working to provide cross-cutting training to these staff, and to their peacekeeping colleagues, to ensure that their roles are complementary and mutually supportive. Child protection advisers and peacekeepers should be aware of the objectives and content of mine-risk education efforts, for example. This briefing offers an opportunity for the Security Council to call upon a range of actors to undertake specific actions that can greatly enhance mine action in peacekeeping context. To this end, the Council may wish to consider and address the following issues in the course of its discussion this morning.

First, there is a strong normative framework on landmines, but an instrument that addresses unexploded ordnance and other explosive remnants of war would greatly facilitate post-conflict clearance

efforts. The rights of mine survivors should also be reflected in the new instrument on the rights of disabled persons being discussed in the General Assembly.

Secondly, parties to conflict should be aware of the important confidence-building role that mine action can play. The United Nations can ensure that Special Representatives of the Secretary-General, negotiators, moderators and facilitators of peace processes systematically receive the United Nations Mine Action Guidelines for Ceasefire and Peace Agreements. The Council could urge parties to conflicts to incorporate mine action into their discussions, whenever relevant.

Thirdly, peacekeeping troops can play an important role in mine clearance. This has recently been demonstrated in the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea, where the mine action coordination centre tasks contractors and force assets to clear and prove roads in the Temporary Security Zone where recent mine use by unidentified groups has undermined the confidence of local inhabitants and posed an obstacle to the return of internally displaced people and refugees. The Council should also consider calling upon troop-contributing countries to train their peacekeeping troops to demine in accordance with the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS). The Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining has developed IMAS for the United Nations, and Ambassador Dahinden will tell us more about that.

Fourthly, mine clearance is an expensive undertaking. We need to ensure that it is systematically directed at the highest priority tasks. In that respect, systematic information gathering is essential for priority setting and cost effectiveness. Peacekeeping missions can collect information on the scope and impact of the landmine and unexploded ordnance problem using the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA).

With guidance from the United Nations, IMSMA was developed by the Geneva International Centre and has now been deployed in some 30 field programmes. Ambassador Dahinden will also tell us about IMSMA.

Fifthly, mine action can be an important part of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes. I have already mentioned the process under way in Afghanistan. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the mine action coordination centre and non-governmental organizations are discussing the use of demobilized soldiers to conduct mine action.

Lastly, let me stress that there is a need for funds. Member States should be encouraged to provide adequate and sustained financial assistance for mine action, and thereby alleviate the suffering of populations affected by mines, unexploded ordnance and other explosive remnants of war.

The Department of Peacekeeping Operations is grateful for the leadership and support the Security Council has shown for the integration of thematic concerns into the mandates, staffing proposals and budgets of peacekeeping operations. I hope that, as a result of these briefings, Security Council members will continue to make use of the information on mines and unexploded ordnance contained in the Secretary-General's reports to the Council and to fully reflect mine action concerns in their country-specific deliberations and resolutions.

The President: I call on Ambassador Dahinden.

Mr. Dahinden (Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining): I am grateful and honoured, Sir, by your invitation to address the Security Council today.

The Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) supports the efforts of the international community to reduce the impact of landmines and unexploded ordnance. It provides operational assistance, is active in research and supports the implementation of the Ottawa Mine Ban Convention. The Centre provides a wide range of services, such as advisory missions, training, evaluation and technical support, to mine-affected countries, donor Governments, the United Nations, other international agencies and non-governmental organizations.

Two areas of our work are particularly important to peacekeeping. They are information management and mine-action standards. Also relevant is a recently completed study on the role of the military in mine action, which was requested by the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS). Timely and accurate information on the threat of mines and unexploded ordnance is of vital importance for the conduct of peacekeeping operations and for enabling the delivery of humanitarian assistance, as well as for post-conflict reconstruction. Typically, a wide range of different

actors, such as the military, local authorities, international agencies and non-governmental organizations, need such information to pursue their tasks.

To be effective, it is critical to enable the different actors to collect and exchange information on the threat in a standardized way. It is also important to handle and share this information across the different phases of crisis management and reconstruction. Until recently, this has rarely been done in a satisfactory way. Over the past few years, working together with the United Nations Mine Action Service, the Geneva Centre has developed and made available the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA). This is a computer-based tool for the standardized collection, storage, analysis and dissemination of data on the mine and unexploded ordnance (UXO) threat. The system now runs in 36 countries or programmes and is mainly applied in post-conflict situations. However, it is very important for mine action that data handling be done in an interoperable way from the beginning. This is why the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations at its fifty-seventh session encouraged troop-contributing countries to make use of the IMSMA system.

In the peacekeeping context, IMSMA is today used by the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea, the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus and the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara. It is also in use by the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan and, of course, outside the peacekeeping context, in Iraq.

The Geneva Centre provides pre-deployment and post-deployment support for the IMSMA system, which is largely funded by the Swiss Government. Support includes training, technical assistance for system installation and set-up, the transfer of existing data sources to IMSMA, if necessary, and follow-up maintenance and support. As with any professional software, there is continuous development work underway, and the system is available in a range of languages. The ownership and control of the data is, of course, with the user.

It is encouraging to see that the military forces of an increasing number of troop-contributing countries are conducting IMSMA training programmes themselves, such as France, the United Kingdom and the United States. Likewise, most international mine-action non-governmental organizations are familiar with the system and use it.

Mine-action standards are another major and relevant area of work of the Geneva Centre. They are prepared, as members have heard from the Under-Secretary-General, under a mandate from the United Nations. The standards have two very important purposes. First, they help to improve quality in mine action and, secondly, they facilitate cooperation among the different actors. Since the standards have become widely applied, there is now a common terminology and shared conceptual thinking, and training and education have improved. In short, there is now much better interoperability and mutual understanding among the different humanitarian mine-action actors.

In his recent report to the General Assembly the Secretary-General recommended that

> "Countries contributing troops to peacekeeping operations with expertise in explosive ordnance disposal and mine clearance should ensure that operations are conducted in accordance with IMAS". *(A/58/260, para. 60 (f))*

The potential benefits for peacekeeping operations of the International Standards would be to improve interoperability among the engineering contingents of troop-contributing nations and to ensure that areas demined by them do not have to be cleared again at a later stage. Peacekeepers clear mines mainly in support of their mission. However, it is important that this work be performed according to agreed standards, and then recorded in a common format.

In the past, the mine action activities of peacekeeping operations have often been the origins of subsequent national mine action programmes, but those transitions could have gone more smoothly had there been agreed standards already in place. In cases such as Eritrea and Lebanon, where mine action activities are being conducted by a national authority in most parts of the country while other tasks are being undertaken by peacekeeping troops in a mandated zone, the need for common standards is even more critical.

In addition to the technical elaboration of the Standards, the Geneva Centre is about to expand its outreach and training programme, with the main effort directed towards helping mine-affected countries continue to implement the Standards. The Geneva

Centre also works closely with the military to disseminate the International Standards. As just one example, next week the Centre will be holding a workshop in Santiago at the request of the Government of Chile. Training courses and workshops have been held in the context of NATO staff officers courses, as well as through the Partnership for Peace programme. The Centre has recently conducted training on the Standards with the armed forces of Ukraine, to support their mine action efforts with the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). As with the information management system, training on the International Standards has been conducted by a number of armies for their own use.

The most appropriate role for the military in mine action has been the subject of debate in both civilian and military circles for some time. At the request of UNMAS, the Geneva Centre has recently completed a study of that issue. The study found that military expertise in breaching minefields is not easily transposed to humanitarian demining, where nothing less than 100 per cent clearance is acceptable if land is to be returned safely to civilian populations. While the military are able to provide warnings to civilians about the dangers of mines and unexploded ordnance, they are not well prepared to undertake ongoing community-based awareness and education campaigns. In general, military peacekeeping troops have not carried out large-scale survey, marking or mine clearance operations.

In many countries, the national mine action response has been based around the military, although this has been found to be most effective when aspects such as priority-setting and quality control were under civilian control. The destruction of stockpiled mines by States parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction has usually been completed successfully by their own military forces.

The recent global experience in crisis-management and peacekeeping operations has shown that all these emergencies involve a wide range of different actors. It has also proven that the overall success of an operation depends largely on the capability to manage a smooth transition to the post-conflict phase as the international military presence is dismantled. Information-management and international standards, and also a better understanding of the capabilities and limitations of the military in such situations, can significantly improve the effectiveness of mine action and can contribute to a smooth transition. That is what the Geneva Centre is committed to achieve in partnership with the United Nations, and we stand ready to assist as required.

The President: I thank Mr. Dahinden for his important briefing.

Mr. Sow (Guinea) (*spoke in French*): My delegation would like once again to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for the month of November, and to assure you of our full support. We are grateful to you for having organized this meeting on the importance of mine action for peacekeeping operations, an item that is of high priority in the maintenance of international peace and security.

I wish also to thank Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, and Mr. Martin Dahinden, Director of the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining, for their detailed briefings, which provided additional information on the threat posed by antipersonnel mines and on the ongoing work to clear such mines and to help victims and countries afflicted by this deadly scourge.

We know from experience that the international community, and the General Assembly in particular, has a major political role to play in mine clearance. But, while the General Assembly has a political role in mine action, the Security Council bears the operational role through its peacekeeping operations. That is the context of our consideration of today's item, which gives us the opportunity to think together about the best way to tackle the question of mine action.

The 1997 adoption of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction – which now has 134 States parties – and preparations for the convening at Nairobi, Kenya, in 2004 of the first review conference connote significant progress.

We welcome the outcome of the intersessional meetings: those meetings give the international community an opportunity to reaffirm its abiding commitment to eliminating all antipersonnel mines, to reaffirm its awareness of the humanitarian tragedy of

which they are a principal cause, and to further raise public awareness of the danger and of the advantages of acceding to the Convention.

The commitment of the United Nations is based on its six strategic mine action goals for 2001 to 2005 and is reflected in the progress that has been made towards their implementation, as described in the report of the Secretary-General (A/58/260). All of this merits our attention.

The work of the United Nations — in particular, that of the United Nations Mine Action Service, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Office for Project Services, the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining, non-governmental organizations and actors from civil society — should be supported. In order to promote the exchange of information and experience, there is a need for internal coordination, not only within those bodies, but also between them and the other actors in the international community.

The cooperative relationship that has been established between the entities of the United Nations and universities, non-governmental organizations and civil society deserves our support. This synergy has allowed us to determine the nature and scope of problems posed by mines, to identify the obstacles to be overcome, to outline plans of action and to make recommendations towards more efficient global action.

Along the same lines, my delegation welcomes the establishment of the electronic mine information network, educational activities on the dangers posed by mines, the establishment of networks and information exchanges between mine-affected countries, actions undertaken in the mobilization of resources, legal measures to ensure compliance with the Convention, and assistance to victims.

The creation of the United Nations Mine Action Service within the Department of Peacekeeping Operations attests to the importance of this issue and to the Council's commitment, through the Secretariat, to finding a radical solution to the problem. We welcome the activities undertaken by the Service, in close cooperation with the relevant bodies of the international system. Such activities should be encouraged. Mine-action operations under way within peacekeeping missions should be consolidated and their experiences widely disseminated. Similarly, the endorsement by the Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action of a new series of International Mine Action Standards on the use of mine-detecting dogs, as is being done in Afghanistan, should be shared.

My delegation believes that we should consider mine-action requirements at the very outset of planning for peacekeeping operations and that troop-contributing countries should integrate demining into their training programmes, in strict compliance with international norms. We appreciate the decision of the Inter-Agency Coordination Group to develop guidelines for the integration of a gender perspective into mine-action programmes and we encourage the continuation of consultations on that issue with United Nations personnel on the ground.

We welcome the integration of mine action into peacekeeping, humanitarian and development programming and budgeting. In that context, we support the work of the Mine-Action Support Group to promote regular contacts between the United Nations and donors, as well as the management by the United Nations Mine Action Service of a database that updates the investments and resources necessary to efficient and planned mine action.

The issue of anti-personnel landmines and unexploded ordnance is closely linked to conflict prevention and management and to peace-building. The statements of Mr. Guéhenno and Mr. Dahinden were extremely important in that respect. In order to attain these interdependent objectives, we need to ensure compliance with international conventions, prevent the ongoing use of these weapons and, above all, eliminate those already deployed. At the operational level, medium- and long-term success will depend on integrating mine action into national and regional disarmament, demobilization and reintegration projects.

My country, the Republic of Guinea, is a party to the 1997 Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction and will continue to strive to implement its standards, working with our partners in the international community in order to make anti-personnel landmines a thing of the past.

In conclusion, my delegation supports the draft presidential statement to be issued at the outcome of the debate. We remain convinced that the Security Council will strengthen its work for international peace and security by taking into consideration in its debates

the proposals and recommendations to be put forth at this meeting.

The President: I thank the Representative of Guinea for the kind words he addressed to me.

Mr. Mekdad (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): I should like to thank you, Sir, for convening this meeting on the vital topic of the importance of mine action for peacekeeping operations. We hope that our deliberations will again draw attention to the humanitarian aspects of the problem. We also thank Mr. Guéhenno and Mr. Dahinden for their useful briefings on this subject.

Demining activities have two dimensions, humanitarian and disarmament, both of which, in accordance with the United Nations Charter, are mandates of the General Assembly. The General Assembly has addressed these two dimensions in the past and adopted a number of resolutions on them. I reaffirm that mine action in peacekeeping operations in no way entails a transfer of responsibilities from the Assembly to the Security Council.

The significance of this subject lies in its link to the humanitarian dimension and to the number of casualties among civilian workers in peacekeeping forces. It is worth noting that demining is a long-term and dangerous undertaking; it may often take decades and require vast financial resources to complete, given the difficulties of action in this field, particularly the lack of minefield maps or the unwillingness of certain parties to provide them to the relevant demining agencies, as well as the special geographical characteristics of certain conflict zones.

The link between peacekeeping operations and humanitarian programmes is extremely important, since both are undertaken in the context of peacekeeping and post-conflict peace-building. Here, I should like to commend the role played by the United Nations through its mine-action centres, which have done excellent work in the past two decades in many countries facing this problem.

Proceeding from its belief in this humanitarian role, my country — with the cooperation of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon and other Arab donors — has assisted brotherly Lebanon in removing mines from the liberated Lebanese territories that were planted by the Israeli occupation forces. Field assistance, expertise and training are being offered in order to help eliminate the mines and their catastrophic effects on civilians and the inhabitants of the affected areas.

This noble work must always be undertaken with sincere and tireless effort if it is to achieve its desired objectives. We hope for such a collective effort in order to achieve the best possible results, minimize the damage caused by this problem and avoid further humanitarian losses due to mines.

The President: I thank the Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic for the kind words he addressed to me.

Mr. Duclos (France) (*spoke in French*): Allow me to say that we believe that the Council's presidency has undertaken an excellent initiative in proposing this subject for our debate today. It is very useful to engage in collective soul-searching with regard to a problem that we are all aware is, on several levels, of crucial importance to the work carried out by the international community when it intervenes in crises. I would also like to welcome the excellent briefings given by Under-Secretary-General Guéhenno and Ambassador Martin Dahinden, who has very clearly illuminated the various aspects of this subject.

Given the statements made by the two previous speakers, which I fully support — and especially many of the things said by the representative of Guinea — I shall confine myself to three comments.

First, it is clear from the briefings we have heard that the United Nations has taken stock of the problems and that mine action is today undoubtedly being mainstreamed into the culture of the United Nations. We can be particularly pleased at the fact that peacekeeping operations very much now reflect the crucial need for mine action. We have noted that the main peacekeeping operations, in particular the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, now include an important element dealing with mine action.

As the two previous speakers have done, I would add that the General Assembly is playing an important role in the work done by the United Nations in the area of mine action. Since 1998, mine action has been regularly addressed, followed up and expanded by the General Assembly. France welcomes the fact that the resolutions adopted in that regard, which have traditionally been introduced by the European Union,

cover all the work done by the United Nations in the area of anti-personnel mines. Those resolutions also provide a politically useful and legitimate context for peacekeeping operations. They have also highlighted the work of the Mine Action Service of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. In that regard, I welcome the important role the Service is playing, in particular in the area of cooperation.

Secondly, it is also clear that, as always, there are areas where further progress could be made. I thank Mr. Dahinden and Mr. Guéhenno for pointing out some possible ways by which that could be done. I am thinking, for example, about what Mr. Guéhenno said regarding potential progress in the area of norms, the role of mine action as a confidence-building measure, the need to better train the troops that are contributed in mine-action awareness and, lastly, the issue of financing mine action. I would perhaps add one thing to that. We believe it to be altogether crucial that the Ottawa Convention be recognized not only with regard to its role in banning anti-personnel mines, but also as a tool to mobilize mine action at all levels, including in the area of demining. It is a fact that the Convention, which was in large part the result of work done by civil society, has played a major role in mobilizing efforts in the area of demining. For us, that is another reason to hope that all the major countries with an important role to play in peacekeeping throughout the world will accede to the Convention as soon as possible.

Thirdly, despite the major role being played by the United Nations — which, once again, we should welcome — it does not mean that Member States should not make their contributions and every possible effort in their national capacities. For its part, France is making a contribution through the European Union and the United Nations Development Programme, as well as through its bilateral cooperation. Our mine action efforts have in recent years taken place on almost every continent, including in Cambodia, Nicaragua, Kosovo and Croatia — not to mention Angola, which this year we will be providing with over $3 million as part of our bilateral assistance. In the context of our bilateral military cooperation, I should point out that we are endeavouring to develop demining training in many countries, in particular African countries. For instance, last spring France opened a regional training centre in Benin.

With regard to assistance to victims, we actively support the work done by non-governmental organizations, and in particular by Handicap International.

In conclusion, I would like to say that these activities must be carried out in close cooperation with the United Nations. In that regard, the work could include both official and unofficial efforts. I would like to say that we very much appreciate what is being done in the Mine-Action Support Group, which is now presided over by Germany. I salute the work it has done in that regard. I would also like to say that we believe it is very important that we in the United Nations are aware of the fact that the political geography of mine action has to be evaluated and frequently reviewed to fine-tune mine action in the field. It is very important to continue to work against the mass use of mines, such as was the case in Cambodia, Angola and other countries massively affected by anti-personnel mines.

It is also important to undertake perhaps more limited and sophisticated work that has greater political impact in the context of crisis management, as Mr. Guéhenno said. For example, in terms of confidence-building measures, it is important that mine action is given the importance it deserves in West Africa, where the problem is less widespread, because of its potential impact on crisis management. In that vein, we have been pleased at the importance attached to mine action in the peacekeeping operation in Liberia. We think that, generally speaking, this issue should be taken into account in the context of the entire subregion.

The President: I thank the representative of France for the kind words he addressed to me.

Mr. Muñoz (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): Permit me at the outset to thank you for having convened the Council to discuss in an open meeting a matter as universal and timely for the international community as mine action. I am also grateful for the important briefings by Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, and by Mr. Martin Dahinden, Director of the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining.

The conflicts which the Security Council addresses in the exercise of its authority are usually of two types, and they generally cause great loss of human life, mutilation and suffering, in addition to material losses. These are, first of all, anti-personnel mines and, secondly, the proliferation of small arms

and light weapons. Mine action is therefore an essential element in peace-building in that, as practice has shown, it plays an important role in peacekeeping operations. Also, mine-clearance operations play a preventive role, which is of primary importance in terms of preserving the life and physical integrity of the personnel conducting peacekeeping operations and of the personnel engaged in humanitarian activities. But we also think of the local population, innocent women and children, who are very often affected.

Our experience has allowed us to develop, within United Nations policy, mine action initiated by the Assembly, and the role of the United Nations Mine Action Service is today part of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO). During this time, many international instruments have been drafted and continually updated with new universal norms, such as the Ottawa Convention and Protocol II of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, as well as mechanisms for cooperation and action to resolve these problems.

Chile has implemented these instruments and has also taken the necessary measures to fulfil its commitments proceeding from these instruments. Our country has, as a first step, eliminated its stockpiles of anti-personnel mines. In this regard, Mr. President, it is a pleasure for me to communicate to you that last August we destroyed the last 59,000 anti-personnel mines stockpiled by our country's armed forces, complying two years in advance with Chile's obligations under the Ottawa Convention. From now on, our country's efforts, over a nine year period, will be aimed at planning the removal and destruction of all anti-personnel mines planted on national territory.

At present, our Government's efforts are also aimed at providing humanitarian assistance to mine accident victims and to local communities. We have worked efficiently to mark those areas that contain minefields, delimiting them and making them known. We have also broadly distributed pamphlets containing preventive measures for persons who have to transit through areas close to these marked fields.

Mine-clearance activities in our country are concentrated in a public commission with multisectoral participation, reporting to the President of the Republic. One of the main functions of the National Demining Commission is to propose policies, legal norms and plans for compliance with the Ottawa Convention, as well as to obtain resources to develop a national humanitarian mine-clearance plan which, as I have said, has been carried out efficiently and ahead of schedule.

We have no doubt that, from the present perspective of the United Nations Mine Action Service, the Security Council must include in the mandates of peacekeeping operations, as a regular and priority matter and whenever the situation so requires, mine action as well as action regarding other explosive remnants of war. Such action, in our view, should work towards the elimination of landmines, of unexploded ordnance and, in general, of other explosives remnants of war or conflicts because of their serious effects on the civilian population in particular, particularly children, humanitarian personnel and the personnel of the United Nations itself. This must be done in accordance with nationally and internationally agreed technical criteria.

We agree on the need to reiterate the serious dangers posed by mines and other explosive remnants and we believe that the Council should support the activities of the United Nations Mine Action Service in the DPKO, with special recognition being given to the work done by this Department in terms of coordination. We also believe that the Council, through its resolutions, should promote, among other things, respect by all Member States for the norms of international law on the subject, and we particularly urge the parties to a conflict to refrain at all times from the production, transfer, stockpiling and use of this type of material.

At such an important occasion as this, we cannot overlook the courage and dedication of the experts who have risked their lives and their physical integrity in mine clearance. Our country is proud of contributing effectively to mine-clearance activities as members of peacekeeping and mine-clearance operations, as we did in Nicaragua, and cooperating with other armies in the removal of mines, as we have done with Ecuador. We wish to pay tribute to all those who have become victims of this dangerous work while ensuring that innocent people do not fall prey to that scourge.

Allow me to conclude by pointing out that the Human Security Network, a group of countries of which Chile is a member, has anti-personnel mine action as one of its priorities. We therefore reiterate, on behalf of the group of countries who are part of the

Network, our endorsement of the inclusion, as a priority, of this aspect in the mandates of peacekeeping operations that are approved by the Council.

The President: I thank the representative of Chile for the kind words addressed to me.

Mr. Belinga-Eboutou (Cameroon) (*spoke in French*): Mr. President, I was away from New York when you assumed the Presidency of the Council, so now, even if somewhat belatedly, allow me to say how delighted we are to see you presiding over the work of the Council for the month of November. We are particularly delighted in doing this because your entire programme revolves around what we deem to be most precious: mankind.

My delegation therefore welcomes this timely initiative that you took in organizing an open debate on the importance of mine action in peacekeeping operations. That is surely a topical and relevant issue that, because of its many effects on people and on the future of countries emerging from armed conflicts, arouses very great interest, not only among such countries, but also within the entire international community. Cameroon, a country signatory to the Ottawa Convention on landmines, is very pleased at the opportunity to take part in this debate.

In that regard, I am pleased to congratulate Mr. Jean-Marie Guehenno, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, on his outstanding briefing and the very useful information he has imparted to us. I should also like to express my appreciation to Ambassador Martin Dahinden, Director of the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining, for his briefing.

Anti-personnel mines are despicable and inhuman weapons that strike indiscriminately and, each year, cause many deaths and injuries and horrible suffering for those who survive. The unacceptable nature of those weapons stems mainly from the fact that they strike in both wartime and peacetime and without any distinction. It also stems from the fact that they ravage civilian populations, particularly women and children — the innocent.

The consequences of these weapons have been denounced for years by the international community. Anti-personnel mines continue to kill and mutilate many years after the end of conflicts; they jeopardize peace-building and reconstruction efforts and therefore have harmful effects on the economic development of the affected areas. Indeed, landmines hamper the resumption of agricultural activities, prevent the return of refugees and displaced persons and put at risk the provision of humanitarian assistance to populations victimized by conflict, perpetuating the precariousness of their situation. Therefore, they can lead to a resurgence of tensions and even confrontations.

Such harmful effects of anti-personnel mines on the establishment of lasting peace and security in countries emerging from armed conflict justify, in our view, the efforts of the international community — particularly the Organization — to find appropriate responses to the multitude of problems posed by mines. Thus it has been proved necessary for the United Nations to take the initiative when peacekeeping operations are deployed as well as later on, in the post-conflict phase, to address the problem of landmines.

My delegation is pleased that, for several years now, mine action has been integrated into the Security Council's mandates for peacekeeping operations. That is the case with the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea and the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Mine action, led mainly by the United Nations Mine Action Service, comprises demining per se, raising mine awareness, educating people about risk reduction, victim assistance and activities to promote a total ban on anti-personnel landmines as well as the destruction of stockpiles.

Within the framework of peacekeeping operations, mine action therefore seeks to provide greater chances for peace and to promote a swift resumption of economic activity and a return to normalcy in countries affected by conflict. If implemented early enough, mine action has a greater chance to be effective and to attain the aforementioned objectives.

The success of United Nations mine action, however, depends largely on mobilization of resources, since the vast majority of activities are funded by donors' voluntary contributions. It is therefore imperative, given the scope of the problem, that donor sensitization and resource mobilization efforts be sustained. Here, Cameroon launches a passionate appeal to donor countries to provide adequate and

enhanced support to mine action in African countries emerging from conflict situations.

My delegation hopes that those concerns will be reflected and find a place in the draft statement that our discussion will only serve to reinforce.

The President: I thank the representative of Cameroon for the kind words he addressed to me.

Sir Emyr Jones Parry (United Kingdom): As this is my first formal opportunity to do so, Sir, I wish you every success in the presidency and promise you the full support of the United Kingdom. Like previous speakers, I am very grateful for the briefings that we have received.

We very much welcome the decision to convene this meeting. The need to do so was reinforced for those members of the Security Council who saw the substantial and courageous work being done in Kabul last week to get rid of the scourge of landmines in Afghanistan. Today's speakers have eloquently demonstrated that mine action plays a key role in underpinning peace processes and in assisting countries emerging from conflict by overcoming a serious and truly substantial risk to the whole process of post-conflict reconstruction.

The political, economic and psychological impacts of buried mines are very substantial. But, with approximately 15,000 to 20,000 landmine casualties each year, we clearly have a collective responsibility to take action and achieve effective, durable results. So it is reassuring to note today that there has been significant progress since the Council last considered this issue, in 1996. In particular, we have the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) and a mine action policy which outlines the key principles of United Nations mine action — principles which have become the United Nations Mine Action Strategy for 2001-2005. In addition, thanks to our Canadian friends, the Ottawa Convention was a major step forward. And there have been other significant innovations, including the establishment of the Information Management System for Mine Action, which we heard about earlier; the United Nations operational framework for rapid response; and the Mine Action Guidelines for Ceasefire and Peace Agreements, as well as the work of the New York-based Mine Action Support Group, under the dedicated leadership of Germany, aimed at improving coordination of donor mine action activity.

We welcome — and indeed support — all those developments. They have helped to create a more strategic, systematic and coordinated response to mine action issues at the national and global levels. But those strategic developments must crucially relate to activities on the ground, and it is very welcome that mine action is being effectively integrated, or mainstreamed, as part of United Nations peacekeeping operations and mandates. As Under-Secretary-General Guéhenno recognized, peacekeeping and confidence-building are benefiting from mine action.

To give a few examples, the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea was the first occasion on which a mine-action coordination centre was established as an integral component of a United Nations peacekeeping mission. We were pleased to contribute towards that effort by training Kenyan peacekeeping troops to conduct demining activities to International Mine Action Standards. Again, as the Under-Secretary-General pointed out, that training is basic to empowering peacekeepers.

The establishment of a United Nations mine-action coordination centre within the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), helped facilitate the effective cooperation and collaboration between the Lebanese national demining office and United Nations agencies, including UNIFIL. The result: dramatic progress, with over 33,000 anti-personnel mines cleared ahead of schedule.

The emphasis placed by the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo on clearing key strategic areas to increase the capability of the United Nations has resulted in the clearing of roads, airfields and civic areas, which has benefited the local population.

Those examples demonstrate the benefits that mine action can bring as part of a peacekeeping operation, especially in terms of peace-building and post-conflict recovery and reconstruction. Those benefits include improved safety and security of United Nations workers, peacekeepers and affected populations, improved delivery of humanitarian assistance and access to vulnerable populations. Such action improves the environment for the safe return of refugees and improves opportunities through the availability of mine-risk education, thus enabling populations to better cope with the risks and to assist those that fall victim to mines. It should also bring

improved employment and income opportunities through the restoration of land for productive use. Improved economic development and opportunity to progress will contribute towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Underpinning that is the psychological gain of removing an uncertain but real humanitarian threat to the population.

The wide range of benefits to be gained from mine action in the context of peacekeeping operations and the wide range of stakeholders involved in the process highlight the need for effective coordination at all levels. The United Nations Mine Action Service is uniquely placed to perform that task, which is why the United Kingdom is committed to supporting its coordination role. We currently provide $16 million of annual funding in support of mine-action activities, most of which is channelled through the United Nations. I think that $1.5 million of that goes to support the important work of the Geneva Centre, about which we heard earlier.

Finally, the United Kingdom looks forward to the completion of an agreed presidential statement, which is under preparation at the moment. It will be important in terms of highlighting the key issues associated with mine action for peacekeeping operations, assessing the progress we have made so far and identifying the way in which we can work together to move this agenda forward and tackle the large number of problems that remain.

Mr. Raytchev (Bulgaria): Allow me first of all to join others in commending you, Mr. President, for having convened this meeting on an issue which, in our view, is of primary importance for the international community. I would also like to thank the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Jean-Marie Guéhenno, and the Director of the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining, Ambassador Dahinden, for their well-focused and detailed introductory remarks.

Bulgaria fully shares the concern about the harmful and widespread impact of landmines and other explosive remnants of war on civilian populations, especially children, humanitarian workers and United Nations staff, and we recognize the long-term impact that landmines have on the achievement of durable peace, security and development. Landmines, unexploded ordnance and explosive remnants of war cause severe suffering and damage to the civil population and have dramatic economic and social consequences. They place a heavy burden on the affected countries and make their rebuilding even harder. That fact has been widely acknowledged by the international community, and international mine action is one of the priorities on the agenda of the United Nations. In this respect, I would like to point out that Bulgaria was among the first to formally accept and implement the principles set out in the Ottawa Convention, thus contributing to the abolition of a whole class of weapons with indiscriminate affects.

The issue of mine action is especially relevant for peacekeeping operations, because they take place in mine-affected regions and mines and unexploded ordnance seriously hamper the efforts of peacekeepers, as well as of humanitarian organizations, to render assistance. Bulgaria considers that the inclusion of mine-action requirements in peacekeeping mission planning and structure is of great importance for the adequate fulfilment of the mandates of the missions. We welcome the effective coordination of mine-action activities within the United Nations system and the important mandate of the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. The role of UNMAS in ensuring coordination of mine action throughout the United Nations system and the provision of support to multidimensional peace operations is, in our view, essential.

We also support the view that effective mine action requires the United Nations, non-governmental organizations and civil society to work in a coordinated manner, with the United Nations taking the lead role. It also requires a comprehensive approach combining mine clearance, stockpile destruction, victim assistance, capacity-building and mine-risk education.

Acknowledging the fact that the primary responsibility for the clearance of landmines and unexploded ordnance lies with the affected countries, we support the view, as put forward by Under-Secretary-General Guéhenno in his statement, that peacekeeping personnel could assist in training local military personnel in demining activities, in accordance with the International Mine Action Standards, which have already been developed.

The role of peacekeepers is vital in providing mine-risk education for the population in the affected regions. Mine-risk education is, in our view, a key

component for the speeding up of social restoration processes.

In our view, the inclusion of mine action in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration efforts is very beneficial for the communities affected. Former combatants could be employed in mine-action programmes, thus reducing the risk of diversions and involving the communities in determining mine-action priorities. Victim assistance is essential for the post-conflict reconstruction and economic recovery of the affected countries. The maiming of civilians poses a serious threat to the economic well-being of those countries. The development of programmes for social reintegration and the re-training of landmine victims should be an integral part of the mandate of peacekeeping missions. Last but not least, we think that sufficient financial resources are of vital importance for the conduct of mine-action activities. That is why enhanced cooperation between donor and recipient countries is needed. Countries in a position to do so could contribute to the Voluntary Trust Fund for Assistance in Mine Action.

In conclusion, I would like to highlight a few points which, in our opinion, are of particular relevance with regard to the implementation of mine action in peacekeeping.

First, we share the view that the dissemination of information is of particular importance.

Secondly, with respect to coordination and flexibility, the United Nations Mine Action Coordination Centre in Kosovo is a special case, but it has managed to encompass all major mine-action sectors in one homogeneous structure. In our view, that experience could be shared with other mine-action programmes, bearing in mind the fact that each situation is different.

Thirdly, concerning implementation, we think that we must continue to focus on progress in the field.

Fourthly and finally, concerning victim assistance, existing structures within the health and social sectors should be reinforced, and services and programmes aimed at mine victims should include all persons with disabilities, regardless of their cause. International organizations, donors and affected States should examine further ways of enhancing mine-victim assistance, including socio-economic reintegration.

Mr. Aguilar Zinser (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Sir, my delegation joins other speakers in congratulating you on your assumption of the presidency of the Council and in particular for the initiative taken by your country, Angola, to convene this meeting of the Security Council on demining efforts and the question of anti-personnel landmines. Your country has been a mine victim, and therefore your leadership in ensuring that the Security Council addresses this issue is particularly appreciated.

My delegation wishes also to thank Under-Secretary-General Jean-Marie Guéhenno as well as Ambassador Dahinden for their briefings. We wish in particular to underscore the efforts made by Under-Secretary-General Guéhenno to present to the Security Council at this meeting a set of proposals and suggestions to broaden the field of action, expand demining efforts and consolidate the normative framework in which the international community is working to combat the scourge of anti-personnel landmines.

We recognize the fundamental role played in that regard by the United Nations, which has made this issue one of its priorities in the context of its endeavours to bring about international peace and security and as part of reconstruction efforts.

We recognize also the role being played by the Geneva Centre, the United Nations Mine Action Service, and, in particular, the work of the United Nations Development Programme and of the United Nations Children's Fund.

Recently, as the Ambassador of the United Kingdom has pointed out, we witnessed, during the Security Council's mission to Afghanistan, the tremendous efforts being made in that country by the United Nations in support of demining and reconstruction. We were able also to take stock of the enormous social and human costs to Afghanistan associated with mines and mine victims, and the effort and expense involved for that country and the international community in eradicating that scourge.

We are convinced that the most effective means of preventing the harm done by mines is to bring about their total elimination. In that connection, Mexico participated actively in negotiations on the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction.

Four years have elapsed since those negotiations ended — negotiations in which Canada, one of the principal sponsors of the Convention, participated actively. Four years later, approximately 141 countries have acceded to that instrument. However, key members of the international community — whose contribution to demining efforts is essential — have not yet acceded to the Convention.

My country therefore wishes here to urge those that have not yet ratified or acceded to that Convention to do so, so that the international community may have at its disposal a general and universally applicable normative framework that very clearly establishes the commitment of all States to eradicate these weapons, whose principal victims are always innocent civilians.

There are also other instruments which the international community has established. We must continue to expand the normative framework, so as to have, at the international level, all the instruments necessary for bringing about the prohibition and eradication of anti-personnel landmines.

It is estimated that there may still be millions of mines in place, which hamper the development process and are responsible for between 15,000 and 20,000 victims a year. It is therefore very important for the Organization to redouble its efforts to proscribe those deadly weapons.

Mexico welcomes the fact that Kenya will host the First Review Conference of the Convention. It is significant that the Conference will be held in Africa, since the countries of that continent have been severely affected and have made an important contribution to eradicating the scourge of anti-personnel landmines, which, we are convinced, should be recognized by the international community.

Since 1993 the Security Council has made a great many statements with regard to the prevalence of mines in various areas of conflict throughout the world. In that context, it has been necessary, in the mandates of various peacekeeping operations, to include explicit references, provide for instruments and make concrete efforts to encourage demining activities.

Our country believes that activities in this area are essential to peace-building efforts. Mexico has actively participated in the implementation of the provisions of the Convention. Mexico, together with other nations of our hemisphere, has participated in two demining processes in Central America. We strongly support the establishment on the American continent of a mine-free zone. We will continue to work towards that end and, under the leadership of the United Nations, to contribute to the efforts of the international community in this area.

Mr. Pleuger (Germany): As I have not yet had the opportunity to do so, I too, Sir, would like to welcome your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council and to pledge the full support of my delegation. I would also like to thank you for convening this very important meeting. Mines are truly a scourge and are killing people every day. I just learned that today, six citizens of Chad and one German citizen working for a German non-governmental organization (NGO) were killed in an explosion related to unexploded ordnance disposal. We deplore the loss of life, and our condolences go to the bereaved families.

A few days ago we had the opportunity to learn of — and to see — the cruelties mines cause to human beings, when we met with mine-action experts in Kabul as part of the Security Council mission to Afghanistan. Mines make life unbearable for all: not just for those injured or mutilated, but also for those who have to live with the constant fear of falling victim to them. Mines hamper the resurgence of civilian life after conflict and thus prolong the war situation for the civilian population, sometimes long after hostilities have ceased.

Laying mines is one of the easiest things in the world to do. Finding and removing them safely, however, is a Herculean task that absorbs resources far exceeding the value of the mine itself. I have read expert estimates that an anti-personnel mine costs $3 to produce, but that its removal costs roughly $3,000. That is an unacceptable relationship — as mine laying is unacceptable anyway.

It is a great relief that the number of States signing and ratifying the Ottawa Convention is steadily increasing, thus enlarging the commitment to the prohibition of the use, stockpiling, production and transfer of anti-personnel mines and the commitment to their destruction. However, even if the load of new mine-related problems may be decreasing, the burden of existing mine problems remains staggering.

You and your fellow citizens, Mr. President, know best what I am talking about, because Angola is

considered to be one of the most heavily mine-affected States in the world.

Mine action, which addresses a variety of mine-related issues, is a new concept that goes beyond the mere military and disarmament aspects. The authors of the Ottawa Convention were wise to establish a broad-based approach to mine action that also includes the humanitarian aspect. When dealing with mine action, the Security Council needs to ask where the Council comes into play. The hybrid nature of mine action does not seem to supply an easy answer.

In broad terms, after armed conflict the peacekeeping phase calls for demining in the interest of the resurgence of basic civilian life in former war zones, and in the interest of the security of the peacekeepers themselves. Demining and mine awareness may at that stage be the essential elements of mine action. And at that stage, the United Nations, especially the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), plays a key role in organizing and coordinating mine action. It is essential that peacekeeping missions be mandated and subsequently organized in such a way as to ensure that the necessary mine-action measures are taken from the outset. In other words, mine action needs to be on the checklist of items to be considered in any peacekeeping mandate issued by the Security Council.

However, as peace begins to be consolidated, the whole array of mine-action features is brought to bear. It is at that stage that, gradually and increasingly, actors from outside the United Nations come into the picture. These include NGOs as well as local and national authorities of the affected country. The role of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is to help build local and national capacity to take over the role of coordinating the various actors in the minefields. To the extent that the number of parties involved in mine action is increasing, coordination is of the essence, and the role of each player must be clearly defined.

Another aspect is the distribution of roles between the Security Council and the General Assembly with reference to mine action. It is not my intention to prejudge the blue-ribbon Panel of eminent persons on the reform of the United Nations, but as I see it, the Council's role is basically to ensure that mine action is considered and, as the case may require, included in peacekeeping mandates.

The General Assembly, on the other hand, deals with mine action in all its aspects, thus responding to the report of the Secretary-General on that matter (A/58/260). Together, the report and the draft resolution on assistance in mine action which is to be submitted in the General Assembly within the next few weeks form an important basis for this discussion.

Germany has, from the outset, supported the concept of mine action. Former German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel, together with his Canadian colleague Lloyd Axworthy, was one of the promoters of the Ottawa Convention. The German contribution to mine action, since 1992, has reached almost $106 million. Germany is a founding member of the Mine-Action Support Group formed by donor countries in 1997 with the objective of establishing a regular exchange of information and views with one another and with United Nations bodies such as UNMAS, UNDP and UNICEF on mine-action activities worldwide.

One of the most important tasks of the Mine-Action Support Group is to help ensure adequate funding of mine-action projects. As Chair of that Group for the current year, I wish to seize this opportunity to appeal to all Member States inside and outside the Security Council that have the means to do so to lend their generous support to the cause of mine action.

The President: I thank the representative of Germany for the kind words he addressed to me.

Mr. Arias (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, Mr. President, I would like to congratulate you and to wish you every success in the coming month. I also hail your wise initiative to bring this very important topic to the Council Chamber. I also wish to thank Under-Secretary-General Guéhenno and Ambassador Dahinden for their presence here today. I fully agree with them that international mine action must remain one of the priorities on the international agenda because of the terrible humanitarian and socio-economic impact of mines and because they hamper the stabilization and development of countries in post-conflict situations.

Had there been any doubt about that, our recent trip to Afghanistan eloquently showed the vital

importance of demining in peace-building and national reconstruction. International action against this scourge can be completely effective only if it combines a balance of elements including the demining operations themselves, the destruction of stockpiles, victim assistance, mine risk education and active international advocacy for the total prohibition of mines. Beyond all that, it is vital to maintain an appropriate level of international funding, in particular in areas such as victim assistance. Increased responsibility on the part of local authorities for mine action should also be promoted.

Spain is firmly convinced that the terrible effects of mines for the affected societies should be fought through firm political and financial commitment and that mine action is an essential part of peace-building.

In terms of its financial commitments, Spain allocated approximately 1.5 million euros to its mine-action programme for 2002: 45 per cent for victim assistance, and 55 per cent for training programmes for humanitarian mine clearance. Indeed, it was Angola that was one of the main beneficiaries of that programme. In addition, my country has mine-clearance units in Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Afghanistan. To that bilateral assistance should be added Spain's contributions within the framework of the European Union — which has committed 240 million euros towards mine action for the period 2002 to 2009 — as well as contributions within the context of the United Nations system, to which Spain has been a regular contributor.

In terms of its political commitment, Spain continues to promote the universalization and full implementation of the Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. Within the framework of the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons which may be deemed to be Excessively Injurious or to have Indiscriminate Effects, my country will continue to support the adoption of binding international instruments governing unexploded ordnance and mines other than anti-personnel mines.

Inasmuch as mine action is an essential component of peace-building and confidence-building measures in conflict and post-conflict situations, the United Nations is called upon to play a major role, providing a global approach to mainstream that action into peacekeeping operations, humanitarian activities and development strategies. In that connection, Spain is grateful for and fully supports the continuation of the important work of the Mine Action Service of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations in its role as coordinator of all anti-mine activities of the United Nations system and provider of technical support for those activities in the mandates, planning and implementation of peacekeeping operations.

On another issue, we feel it would be equally relevant for the Secretary-General, in addition to his annual mine action report to the General Assembly, to incorporate this item in his reports on general peacekeeping operations activities.

I do not wish to conclude without mentioning the gratitude of my delegation for the important contribution to the coordination of international mine action made by institutions such as the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining, which is represented here today.

The President: I thank the representative of Spain for the kind words he addressed to me.

Mr. Konuzin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): My delegation is grateful to Under-Secretary-General Guéhenno and to the Director of the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining, Mr. Dahinden, for their briefings.

The Russian Federation attaches great importance to the whole range of problems related to mine action. We support United Nations efforts to mobilize the international community to address the issue of the danger posed by mines. Russia is acquainted from bitter experience with the tragedy and suffering caused by the uncontrolled use of mines. Despite the fact that more than a half a century has elapsed since the end of the Second World War, Russia's Ministry of Defence and Ministry for Emergency Situations disarms tens of thousands of pieces of unexploded ordnance every year.

We believe it imperative that mine action remains a priority in peacekeeping operations in crisis areas. In that connection, we support the inclusion of appropriate provisions to that end in the mandate of peacekeeping operations authorized by the Security Council.

For its part, Russia is making whatever contributions it can towards mine action. Our peacekeepers, while fulfilling a critical peacekeeping task in the Georgia-Abkhaz conflict zone, are also conducting demining activities in that area. Unfortunately, more than 10 of our soldiers have died or have been seriously wounded as a result of mine explosions in that area.

Russia participates in a number of humanitarian mine-clearance projects, in particular, under contract with the United Nations Mine Action Service programme in Kosovo, where we cleared a territory of about 240,000 square metres. During work to rehabilitate the Salang Tunnel in Afghanistan, more than 4,000 mines and explosives were removed and disarmed. We are also prepared to participate in a practical way in mine-clearance operations within the framework of the plan of action for Africa, endorsed by the Group of Eight in Kananaskis.

In order to create a normative and legal basis for Russia's participation in mine-clearance operations, the Russian Government enacted a measure entitled "Measures to facilitate the Russian Federation's participation in international humanitarian mine-clearance programmes, projects and operations". That measure regulates the provision of assistance to other States in the area of mine action.

We support Angola's initiative to discuss mine action in the context of United Nations peacekeeping activities. We believe that the Security Council discussion of this question should focus on specific tasks that arise when carrying out peacekeeping operation mandates. At the same time, we believe that duplication of work by the various agencies and organs of the United Nations in this sphere should be avoided.

Since the General Assembly considers the matter of assistance for mine-clearance activities on a regular basis, we think it would be a good idea for the subject of providing assistance to mine-affected countries to be discussed in that body.

Mr. Zhang Yishan (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation welcomes this meeting and your initiative, Mr. President, in addressing the subject of mine action. We would like to take this opportunity to thank Under-Secretary-General Guéhenno for his briefing, as well as to express our thanks to the Director of the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining, Ambassador Dahinden.

Landmines have been widely used as a means of warfare in conflicts around the world. Since the end of the cold war, the humanitarian problems arising from the use of landmines are receiving increasing international attention. In peacetime, some former conflict-stricken countries and regions continue to face the scourge of large numbers of landmines that remain from the wars and conflicts that have since ended. Those landmines hang over the heads of the local population like the sword of Damocles. They not only threaten the life and property of the population and impede the efforts of United Nations humanitarian relief and peacekeeping operations, but also hinder economic and social progress. This problem, if it is not addressed effectively, will undoubtedly undermine the international community's efforts to help the affected countries in their post- conflict reconstruction.

The humanitarian problems arising from the use of landmines have received great attention from the United Nations. The General Assembly adopted a resolution on this subject as early as in 1993. In August 1996, the Security Council dedicated a discussion to demining in connection with United Nations peacekeeping operations. In 1998, the United Nations published a document entitled, *Mine action and effective coordination: United Nations policy*, which elaborated on the United Nations responsibilities and role with regard to landmines, as well as the principles to be followed in mine action. In recent years, under the guidance of these principles, United Nations bodies have coordinated their efforts through a division of labour to help the affected countries solve the problems associated with landmines. In many peacekeeping operations, mine action has been regarded as an important component of their mandate. Missions such as UNIFIL, UNMEE and MONUC, among others, have, through mine action, made effective contributions to improving the humanitarian situation in the affected countries and regions, promoting their economic recovery and development, and bolstering the people's confidence in the peace process. We appreciate the positive efforts made by the United Nations in removing the dangers of landmines. We encourage the Mine Action Service of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and other entities to provide a review of their successful experience and step up their communication and cooperation with the relevant countries, Governments, international organizations, and civil society.

China understands that the affected countries are mainly concerned with the humanitarian problems arising from the use of landmines. We have consistently supported the international community in its effort to solve this problem. As a State Party to the revised landmine Protocol to the Convention on Conventional Weapons, China has been implementing in good faith all provisions of the Protocol. Although China has yet to accede to the Ottawa Convention, we identify ourselves with the purposes of the Convention and support the ultimate goal of a total ban on anti-personnel landmines.

China has also been active in the area of international assistance for mine action. In 1998, China contributed $100,000 to the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for Assistance in Mine Action, which has assisted mine clearance in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In 1999 and 2000, the Chinese Government cooperated with the United Nations in hosting in China two seminars on international demining techniques for seven mine-affected countries, namely, Angola, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Namibia and Rwanda. In 2001, the Chinese Government provided to Angola, Cambodia, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Namibia and Rwanda, seven countries affected by landmines, mine detection and clearance equipment worth $1.26 million. In 2002, we also donated some mine clearance equipment to Lebanon. In 2002 and 2003, we dispatched two expert groups to Eritrea to train demining personnel and to direct on-site demining activities. To better participate in the international assistance activities in mine action and step up our demining cooperation with other countries, China joined the Mine Action Support Group based in New York this year. We are ready to increase our exchanges and enhance our cooperation with the United Nations and all interested countries in an untiring effort to help affected countries rid themselves of the scourge of landmines at an early date.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): First of all, my delegation would like to express our appreciation for your initiative, Mr. President, with regard to this discussion of the importance of mine action for peacekeeping operations. We have listened very attentively and appreciatively to the statements made by Under-Secretary-General Guehenno and Ambassador Dahinden. Pakistan is alarmed to see that there are still 200 million landmines stockpiled globally, almost half of them scattered in about seventy countries, completely unattended. Some 15,000-20,000 people fall victim to the indiscriminate use of such landmines every year. Seventy percent of the casualties are civilians, a large proportion of them women and children. Anti-personnel mines and unexploded ordnance pose severe economic and social consequences for the affected countries and place a heavy burden on economic and social reconstruction. Anti-personnel landmines also continue to prevent a large number of refugees in post-conflict situations from returning to their homes.

It would be useful to recall the substantive debate held by the General Assembly last week on the issue of assistance in mine action. The Secretary-General's report on this subject contained in document A/56/260 and Add.1 was most useful in that discussion. The annual review of the United Nations mine strategy, steered by the Secretary-General, also reflects a positive response from the global community. In particular, we have noted progress in implementation of the six strategic goals and related objectives, that is, increased information and improved information technology to create awareness, improved capacity to respond to emergencies, especially in the most affected countries, such as Iraq and Afghanistan, sustained efforts to build national mine-action capacity, significant improvement in quality management and coordination of mine-action activities, enhanced resource mobilization from donor countries, and increased advocacy in support of the relevant legal instruments.

One principle that requires universal acceptance and implementation is that of the responsibility of the States that actually place landmines or leave other unexploded ordnance behind in conflict situations. Until this principle is acknowledged and countries that are responsible for such actions are called upon to assume their responsibilities, at least to clear up these landmines, we believe that action will continue to be inadequate and slow at the global level. We have noted the priority issues, which Under-Secretary-General Guehenno has identified in his statement to the Council this morning, and we believe that this will provide a very useful framework for the Council's action in the future. We agree with the representative of Germany that the Council's role is principally related to the contribution that we can make in the context of conflict situations or post-conflict situations and in peacekeeping operations, where the Council obviously

has an important role to play in mine clearance, during and after conflicts.

It is quite clear in the context of the situations in which the Council is presently involved that we need to include mine-laying prevention and mine clearance as essential objectives in conflict situations, such as in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in West Africa. Prevention in this case, as usual, is better than the cure, and it could be an objective that we could pursue in the context of the peacekeeping operations that the Council has presently under way.

Afghanistan presents a stark illustration of the tragedy caused by landmines. In Afghanistan, approximately 300 people are killed or injured every month by landmines and unexploded ordnance, and this has a history of over 20 years in that country.

According to the latest report of the Mine Action Programme for Afghanistan,

> "Mines and exploded ordnance are an obstacle to the resettlement of the millions of internally displaced persons and returning refugees."

At the current pace of demining activities, the report acknowledges that Afghanistan could be cleared of landmines only after 10 years. Such an operation would require approximately $500 million. Therefore, we would urge the donor nations and agencies to accelerate their pace so that the demining period in Afghanistan could be shortened, paving the way for the early rehabilitation of the Afghan people and the return of the Afghan refugees to their country. Despite the strain on Pakistan's medical facilities, hundreds of Afghan mine victims are treated in hospitals and rehabilitation centres every year.

It is obvious that the main constraints on action by the international community is the paucity of funds; secondly, the application of the latest technologies in conflict situations and post-conflict situations for mine clearance; and, thirdly, the absence of a clear strategy for the rehabilitation of mine victims.

Being the largest troop contributor to United Nations peacekeeping operations, Pakistan has actively contributed to the demining operations in several affected countries in the past. We have participated in the demining operations in Kuwait, Cambodia, Angola, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Western Sahara. We are also helping in demining operations in Lebanon, Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Pakistan would be ready to provide training facilities to mine-affected countries.

In conclusion, let me recall Pakistan's unique record of clearing all mine fields after the three wars that were fought in South Asia, as well as during the recent military standoff with our eastern neighbour. There has never been a humanitarian situation caused by mines placed by Pakistan in the context of such conflicts. We remain committed to ensuring that mines in our military inventory will never become a cause for civilian casualties in Pakistan or elsewhere in the world.

Mr. Cunningham (United States of America): I want to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this session today and for your leadership on this issue. I also want to thank Under-Secretary-General Guéhenno and Ambassador Dahinden for their statements. It is important that the United Nations, the Security Council and our Governments as Member States keep the issue of mine action in our focus.

The United States recognizes the agonizing consequences that these hidden killers have on innocent people, whose lives and livelihoods are being shattered by devices like the land torpedoes left behind in more than 60 nations around the world from wars past. Humanitarian mine action can and should be about more than just clearing mines and other explosive remnants of war, such as unexploded bombs, artillery and mortar shells, rockets and grenades.

Also, mine-action efforts can and should play a vital role in furthering peace and stability. Cleared lands provide a physical environment that allows for national reconciliation, stability and economic development. Indeed, in addressing the horrific legacy of landmines and unexploded ordnance, we are not only helping to secure innocents from harm and restore land productivity, we are also providing something essential for communities ravaged by war, and that gives hope. Mine action encourages the hope that the future can be better than the past and hope that patterns of war and violence can be replaced with patterns of peace and prosperity.

Since 1993, the United States has dedicated over $700 million to humanitarian mine action and will provide approximately $100 million more in 2004 to some 40 countries. We are pleased that concerted efforts by mine-affected countries, as well as donor

Governments, international organizations, non-governmental organizations and civil society, have resulted in significant progress towards a mine-safe world.

Since 1988, when the United States first engaged in humanitarian demining in Afghanistan, we have expanded our humanitarian mine-action assistance to more than 40 countries, helping to demine the most dangerous mine fields, train humanitarian deminers, provide medical assistance and vocational training to survivors of landmine incidents and their families, teach children and their parents to identify and avoid the threat, and conduct research and development into new technologies to detect and clear landmines more safely, quickly and efficiently.

Before the start of Operation Iraqi Freedom, there were 10 million to 15 million landmines, over 2,500 minefields, 2,200 unexploded ordnance locations and thousands of abandoned munition sites in Iraq. Unexploded ordnance still present a tremendous humanitarian threat. United States assistance to Iraq began in 2002 with grants by the Department of State Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs in the amount of $25.6 million for a three-year plan to cover mine-risk-reduction education and expansion of the Mine Advisory Group's operations and mine-action coordination and surveys.

The United States believes that we can most effectively help mine-affected countries by supporting sustainable indigenous programmes. Thus, we have established most of our programmes on a bilateral basis. However, we recognize the important role the United Nations system has in meeting this international challenge, and we are proud of our work with the United Nations system to help achieve these results. We salute the leadership of the United Nations Mine Assistance Service (UNMAS), the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Office for Project Services and the World Health Organization for their vital contributions to a mine-safe world.

We are also helping to strengthen mine-action centres abroad. The United States will continue to remain a leading proponent of efforts to mitigate the harmful impacts from the illicit use of landmines through our contributions to humanitarian mine action. The future of mine action and the complementary efforts to protect civilians from mines and other explosive remnants of war should be dynamic and fruitful. A great deal has been learned since the inception of humanitarian demining just over a decade ago. This accumulated body of knowledge will serve the world well in the future. The United States Government, Governments of donor and mine-affected nations, international organizations and the private sector together have created a formidable international network of humanitarian mine action. Working together, we can realistically set our sights on achieving a world where all children can walk the Earth in safety.

The President: I thank the representative of the Unites States for his kind words. I shall now address the floor in my national capacity.

First, I would like to express my thanks and deep appreciation to Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, for his very good briefing and his leadership on this question of mine action.

I would also like to welcome Ambassador Martin Dahinden and to thank him for his very encouraging and comprehensive briefing on this important question, which helps the Council to take the necessary measures on mine action. Let me acknowledge our full support for the United Nations approaches and initiatives in raising awareness of mine-action problems, in developing rapid-response plans and in the building of capabilities at the national level in countries affected by landmines. We also appreciate the positive role played by the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining and we thank Ambassador Dahinden for his substantive remarks and the work done by his organization, attesting to the importance of greater interaction between relevant United Nations agencies, including the United Nations Mine Action Service, and non-governmental organizations acting in this field.

Mines and unexploded ordinance place serious constraints on the lives of millions of people and constitute a heavy burden on the affected countries, all of them recovering from war and struggling to rebuild their societies. Landmines also prevent large numbers of refugees from returning to their homes and severely hamper post-conflict reconstruction, economic recovery, social restoration and development.

We acknowledge that the primary responsibility for dealing with landmines and unexploded ordinance

lies with national authorities. However, due to the limited available technical and financial resources, landmine clearance plans — particularly in developing countries in conflict or post-conflict — tend to fall short of implementation. In this regard, the United Nations and its Mine Action Service can play a crucial role by promoting an integrated approach based on humanitarian assistance and development strategies, in the understanding that effective mine action requires a comprehensive and balanced approached combining mine clearance, the destruction of stockpiles, assistance to victims, capacity-building and mine-risk education.

Angola has experienced for too many years the scourge of war, and the challenges posed by mine-action policies under a peacekeeping operation and in emerging from a conflict situation are clear. The end of war made possible the first systematic national assessment of the landmine issue. I should like to share some figures with the Security Council.

Angola is one of the world's most affected countries by mines and unexploded ordinance. The initial set-up of a landmine impact survey began in December 2002. In 2002 and the first quarter of 2003, non-governmental organizations working in mine action reported the clearing of about 2.8 million square metres of land, the surveying of about 7.8 million square metres of land and the destruction of more than 5,000 mines and 13,000 pieces of unexploded ordinance. The Angolan National Institute for the Removal of Explosive Devices and Obstacles reports that, in 2002, around 600,000 people received mine-risk education.

In 2002, several countries and the European Commission made contributions to mine action in Angola of approximately $21 million — an increase of almost 100 per cent over mine-action funding in 2001. This was a welcome development and an immediate peace dividend, as it was made possible only by the end of the war in my country. It is also the result of Angola's accession to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction.

Emerging from a conflict situation and facing enormous challenges in addressing its economic and social recovery, the Angolan Government has allocated an increasing share of the national budget to mine action. This stands at around $15 million for the 2003 anti-mine programme, which reflects the fact that Angola shares in a large measure the burden of the country's demining effort. Although the donor community continues to be an important provider of support in mine action, the fact that the Angolan Government is allocating a relatively important share of the national budget to mine action shows its will to comply with its commitments and its recognition of the importance of integrating mine action into the overall framework of emergency assistance, resettlement, social and economic recovery, and development strategies.

We are very grateful for the significant assistance provided by the international community, which includes bilateral and multilateral assistance through the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, relevant United Nations agencies and the United Nations Children's Fund. For the year 2004, we expect to strengthen our cooperation with the United Nations system and the non-governmental organizations involved in mine action.

International assistance is a crucial element. For that reason, we appeal to the international community to continue providing adequate and sustained assistance in support of mine action, including through contributions to the Voluntary Trust Fund for Assistance in Mine Action, for sustainable development and long-term security.

In conclusion, I would like to underline the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report on assistance in mine action with a view to enhancing the quality of the United Nations mine-action work. The report shows how United Nations initiatives have provided valuable direction and guidance to all entities involved in its implementation and how it has fostered coordination and accountability across the mine-action community. We share the views outlined in the Secretary-General's report on the objective of the United Nations strategy to effectively integrate mine action into emergency assistance, resettlement, socio-economic recovery and development activities.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

A draft presidential statement on the theme of today's meeting is being negotiated at the expert level and we expect it to be ready for adoption by next week.

I call on Mr. Guéhenno to respond to questions and clarify points that have been raised.

Mr. Guéhenno: I should like first and foremost to express our gratitude for the expressions of support for the work of the United Nations Mine Action Service and of our partners in the United Nations system with regard to mine action.

We welcome in particular the recognition that mine action should be incorporated into the mandates of peacekeeping operations when appropriate. We also welcome the Security Council's appreciation of the role that mine action can play in peace-building efforts with regard to disarmament, demobilization and reintegration when former combatants are employed for mine action purposes.

I would note that mine action is indeed much broader than peacekeeping and the United Nations Mine Action Service, as noted in a recent report of the Secretary-General submitted to the General Assembly during a very important debate. I think that the integrated approach that takes place through the presence of the United Nations Mine Action Service in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations serves mine action well because it means that the kind of mine action that is undertaken in peacekeeping operations — that is, operational demining to facilitate the deployment of our troops — is done in a way that will make coordination with humanitarian demining most effective. Conducting demining operations according to international mine action standards and recording those actions in a standardized way through the Information Management System for Mine Action means that resources will be used in the most effective way and that the cumulative nature of any mine action effort, which unfortunately has to take its course over many years, will be done in the most effective way, ensuring that we do not repeat what has already been done. But that requires a very rigorous approach to mine action. I believe that the integrated approach taken by the Mine Action Service has promoted that and that it will make every effort to improve our modus operandi in the field in order to make even better use of the limited funds that exist for mine action.

The President: I thank Mr. Guéhenno for the clarifications he has provided.

I now give the floor to Mr. Dahinden, also to provide clarifications and responses.

Mr. Dahinden: Thank you very much, Mr. President, for your kind words. I would also very much like to thank the other members of the Security Council for their positive comments and references to my briefing and to the work of the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining.

During this debate I have been particularly pleased that the international mine action standards that we are preparing under a mandate from the United Nations have been found useful, and that many comments have been made to the effect that they are being well applied.

Much of what I said might have sounded very technical to the members of the Council; but the objectives are of course not. This is about saving lives, permitting operations to take place properly, reducing human suffering and promoting social and economic development. I think we should not forget those things when we are looking at the more technical issues.

The President: I thank Mr. Dahinden for his further comments.

There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.